

# Course Syllabus for Sociology 43402

## Population Dynamics

### Spring 2021

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<b>Time &amp; Place</b>	ONLINE COURSE – MW 11:10 AM-12:25 PM
<b>Sakai</b>	I do not use Sakai that much, but the course Sakai page will include the most critical links for the course, e.g. for the class Zoom link and the course web page.
<b>Office Hours</b>	MW 1:30-2:30 and by appointment. I am generally very accessible via phone, voicemail, email, Facebook video, and Zoom – including on nights and weekends if necessary.

## Course summary

Demography, the science of population, is concerned with virtually everything that influences, or can be influenced by, population size, distribution, processes, structure, or characteristics. This course pays particular attention to the causes and consequences of population change. Changes in fertility, mortality, migration, technology, lifestyle and culture have dramatically affected the United States and the other nations of the world. These changes have implications for a number of areas: hunger, the spread of illness and disease, environmental degradation, health services, household formation, the labor force, marriage and divorce, care for the elderly, birth control, poverty, urbanization, and business marketing strategies. An understanding of these is important as business, government, and individuals deal with the demands of the changing population.

## Required Texts

Jennifer Hicke Lundquist, Douglas L. Anderton & David Yaukey. 2015. Demography: The Study of Human Population, Fourth Edition. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc.  
Online Readings packet for Sociology 43402. Compiled by Richard Williams. Available on the the Course Web Page. (Approximately 600 pages, but most of it is not that difficult.)

Lundquist provides a very good overview of the facts, concepts and issues of population dynamics. The readings packet includes selections from a wide variety of mass media and scholarly sources. Though sometimes lengthy, most of the material in the packet is fairly easy to read. The packet is designed to achieve the following purposes:

- To supplement Lundquist, providing additional information on key topics
- To illustrate the wide array of issues, controversies and opinions on population issues
- To show the “real” impact that population issues have on people’s lives

The packet reflects a wide range of views, but I do not claim to present a “balanced” perspective on each and every single issue. Students are encouraged to offer their own views on the issues and to do additional reading on topics of interest to them.

## Format, Policies, Assignments, Exams and Grading – Short Version

Read this even if you skip everything else!

- **Diverse viewpoints are welcome.** It doesn’t matter whether I agree or disagree with you. The critical thing is how well you make your case.
- **There will be one take-home exam during the semester, one paper, and a take-home final.** These are each worth 28% of your grade. Short assignments/ class participation/ attendance will account for the other 16%.
  - *Do not underestimate the importance of the latter!* Some students have lost as much as a full grade because they frequently skipped classes or did not complete short assignments.
    - In particular, you will be required to hand in discussion notes for each topic before the days we are breaking down into small groups, approximately 6 or more times this semester. Besides affecting your participation grade, these notes will be a great help on the exam, as the discussion questions I give you on the readings often bear a remarkable similarity to the exam questions.
    - Regular attendance & punctuality are expected and factor into your participation grade. You are allowed up to three absences for any reason. Attendance will be taken each class. If absences are excessive, University policy allows me to give you a D or F after providing written notice.
  - The best exams will go beyond what was said in class and will cite specific facts, opinions, authors and articles. They will be like short research papers, incorporating information from a variety of sources, except I have provided you with the readings in advance.
  - **The paper should be a major, in-depth examination of some major demographic topic or problem.** It should demonstrate that you are familiar with the relevant research, and that you understand the issues and controversies involved. Your own original thinking, or your ability to offer some sort of critique, may be most helpful (but your own thoughts must not be used as a substitute for adequate research).
  - **There will actually be 4 or 5 paper sessions – two during regular classtime, and two or three sessions held at other times.** You only need to attend two sessions – the one you present in and one other.
- We will use a variety of learning styles in this class – I will lecture some but much of the class will be taught seminar style, including small-group discussions and end-of-year

student presentations. Readings and classroom discussion are critical! If you stay on top of the readings, instead of just cramming for exams, the classroom experience will be much better for you and everyone else.

- Special adaptations are being made for online learning.
  - You will benefit from attending an online class if you are fully awake and present. Please do whatever is necessary for you to get to that state.
  - I expect you to keep your camera on most of the time – it helps me if I can see you and I think it will help you to concentrate better. If that creates problems for you please let me know.
  - Please use your full name when Zooming. It is fine to use your preferred first name, e.g. “Beth” instead of “Elizabeth.”
  - I suggest you tell Zoom to use a nice (not weird or unprofessional) picture of yourself. This is what people see when your video is muted. You can set this up in your Zoom profile.
  - I will often cold-call on people. I am not trying to embarrass anyone – you can occasionally defer on a question – but cold calling can be a good way to keep students involved and paying attention.
  - Some material may be presented asynchronously, e.g. instead of having a regular class you will be asked to watch something on your own.
  - It will be nice if you can Zoom from a place where you are not required to wear a mask, e.g. your dorm room. But, you are required to comply with University rules wherever you are Zooming from.
  - I do NOT intend to record most sessions. I want people to feel free to share their thoughts. Since class is online, you should be able to make most classes even if you are sick or quarantined. If this policy creates problems for you for some reason, let me know why and we will see if we can work something out.
- You are encouraged to make contact with me outside of class, either by phone or electronically.
- Trigger warning – A few topics are sensitive in nature. If there is a topic that you find especially upsetting to you personally, talk to me about it beforehand and we’ll see what we can do.
- Check your Notre Dame email regularly, preferably every day. You may not use email much but I do, and I frequently send messages about upcoming readings and discussion topics.
- Do not lose your work – use some sort of Cloud backup service.
- Honor code and non-discrimination policies are in effect.
- Any files you send me (e.g. exams, papers) should begin with your last name so I can easily alphabetize them. The document itself should include your name, so I don’t have to dig through my email to figure out who sent something. *Include page numbers!!!* No matter how many times I tell students to do this, a few still seem to have strong religious objections to including them, which I find very annoying. *I prefer Word or PDF formats with the files emailed directly to me; if you just send me a Google Docs link I have to go through extra steps to convert and download it.*
- I am assuming everything will work fine. *We will adapt as needed if technical or health problems arise.*

## Format, Policies, Assignments, Exams and Grading – Long Version

**Course Requirements.** There will be two take home exams (a midterm and a final) and one major paper/class presentation. Each will count for 28% of your grade. Class participation will account for the other 16%. Exams will consist of essay and short-answer questions. NOTE: You must complete both exams and the paper. I reserve the right to give a D or F to any student who does not do so, regardless of how well they have done on the parts they completed.

**Exams.** One of the things that will be most important on the exams will be your ability to incorporate material from the readings. The best exams will go beyond what was said in class and will cite specific facts, opinions, authors and articles. They will be like short research papers, incorporating information from a variety of sources, except I have provided you with the readings in advance. Since successful class participation also depends on mastery of the reading, it is important that you not fall behind.

**Attendance & Participation.** This should be an easy 15 or 16 points for you. Come to class, keep up on the readings, hand in all the required short assignments and notes on the readings, and participate in discussions at least occasionally. In other words, do what you should be doing anyway. Unfortunately, missed classes and assignments do sometimes lower final grades substantially. More critically, though, I think these will help you to understand the material better, produce better papers and exams, and improve the overall quality of the classroom experience.

*I expect everyone to attend class regularly and to arrive on time; more than three absences and/or excessive lateness will hurt your class participation grade. Attendance will be taken each class. If absences are excessive, University policy allows me to give you a D or F after providing written notice.*

I will let you know in advance when we are breaking down into small groups (probably at least 6 times during the semester). To make sure that everyone is familiar with the material and has something to contribute, I want you to jot down at least a half dozen notes from the readings that you think are especially important, any thoughts of your own on the subject, and questions which you would like to see discussed. (It is a good idea to always do this but it is especially critical to do so on discussion days.) In general, you should be prepared to make at least a few points about every major discussion question asked. *You should take notes on every topic but I will require you to hand notes in before class on the days we break into small groups.* I will mostly grade these on a present/absent basis but I do expect to see evidence that you have thought about the points and gone over the readings.

**Paper.** The paper should be typed, double-spaced, and approximately 10 to 20 pages long. The paper should include a bibliography and all sources for material should be clearly cited.

- I must approve your topic. By March 26, you should give me a one-page typed summary briefly describing your proposed topic and any sources you have already identified. I encourage you to schedule meetings with me to talk about your ideas.

- If you want to give me a draft of your paper by April 12th, I will return it with comments within about 7 days.
- Papers are due April 26 (although you are welcome and encouraged to hand them in well before that.).
- During the last few weeks of the class you will be given 15 minutes to discuss some aspect of your paper that you think would be of interest to the class (Amount of time and dates may be adjusted based on final enrollment). As a courtesy to your fellow students, I expect everyone to be there on those days. I usually assign grades *after* the presentation, so a strong (or weak) presentation can impact your grade.
- Note that there is nothing that stops you from starting or even completing your paper well in advance of the due date; if you get a lot of the work done early the end of the semester will be a lot less hectic for you.

The paper should be a major, in-depth examination of some major social problem. It should demonstrate that you are familiar with the relevant research, and that you understand the issues and controversies involved. Your own original thinking, or your ability to offer some sort of critique, may be most helpful (but your own thoughts must not be used as a substitute for adequate research). A minimum of four or five scholarly sources should be cited (e.g. books, journal articles). You can also cite other sources – Time, Newsweek, Atlantic Monthly, the New York Times and Wall Street Journal often have excellent articles - so long as you have the minimum number of scholarly references. Note that scholar.google.com is generally better than Google when searching for sources.

There will actually be 4 or 5 paper sessions – two during regular classtime, and two or three sessions held at other times. You only need to attend two sessions – the one you present in and one other. This is a covid-inspired change that has been very popular in my other classes. It allows for smaller, more casual, and in-depth discussions, while at the same time not requiring you to listen to everyone’s paper.

## Some Possible Paper Topics

Following are possible topics for your paper, but you are free to choose others. We will cover many of these in class, but I am sure you will be able to provide a much more in-depth examination. While there will often be some overlap with classroom material, *your presentations should emphasize material that has not already been covered in class.*

- Population status, problems, and prospects in the region/country of your choice (e.g. the former USSR, China, Israel, Latin America, Europe). I'll focus more on the United States, so you may find it worthwhile to look at other countries that are of interest to you.
- What effect does overpopulation in developing countries have on them, on the United States, and on world peace and stability? Is overpopulation really a problem, or is the problem the way in which resources are allocated within societies?
- Is global warming real? If so, how does overpopulation in the developing world and over-consumption in the developed world contribute to it? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the possible policy options?

- Demographic and social consequences of improved technological control over fertility. You might consider the possible impacts of couples being able to choose the sex of their child, test-tube babies, abortion pills, more effective contraceptive methods, surrogate motherhood, etc.
- Catholic perspectives on population issues (e.g. abortion, artificial insemination, birth control, stem cell research). Why does the church hold certain positions? What impact do those positions have? You might offer some sort of critique, or some sort of defense or attack, of Church positions. (You are free to take whatever positions you want, but I expect serious research and facts to be backing up your claims.)
- The American family - what did it used to be like, how has it changed, what will it be like in the future? You might look at changes in family size and composition, the feminization of poverty, changes in family routine, divorce, gay families, cohabitation, etc.
- Demographic effects of changing women's roles (such as on the labor force, fertility, male/female differentials in mortality).
- Demographic effects of changing men's roles and statuses. Do men continue to be the privileged ones? Or is there, as Christina Hoff Sommers claims, a "war against boys" that is turning men into the disadvantaged sex?
- Possible effects of demographic changes on businesses, marketing and politics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What types of products/services will rise/decline in importance? What will the impact be on the American labor force or American politics? Conversely, how will changes in the labor force affect business? You might discuss the effects of changing age composition and changing lifestyles.
- Just a few years ago, many were saying that demographic changes (e.g. the increasing population of Hispanics) were giving Democrats a long-term lock on the presidency. Obviously, that wasn't true in 2016, and even in 2020 Democrats did not do as well as many expected. Why? How are demographic and other factors likely to affect electoral politics in the future?
- Contemporary health problems. Why have health problems such as obesity and diabetes increased in recent years? What effect are they having on the US and/or world population? Will new health care policies in the United States alleviate health problems or make them worse?
- The future of social security - is a "crisis" coming? How will America deal with the elderly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Can "generational warfare" be averted?
- The effects of legal and illegal migration on the United States, both currently and in the future. Do American workers suffer from it? What benefits do immigrants bring? Would policy changes, such as the Dream Act, building the wall, or ending citizenship for anchor babies, be good or bad?
- The effect of demographic characteristics on poverty and wealth in America. How much do family origins, race, sex, etc., affect the status attainment of individuals in America today? Is the middle class collapsing, and if so why?
- Housing and segregation in America. What effect has racial segregation in housing and other areas had on American life? Is segregation declining, or will it change in the future?
- The effects of Covid-19. There are several possible areas you could cover. How has Covid-19 affected health and mortality in the US or the world? What lingering, long-term effects is Covid having (e.g. heart problems, loss of senses of taste and smell)? How has Covid exacerbated already-existing racial and economic inequalities? What changes are needed to avoid a similar crisis in the future?

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TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Feb 3, 8 – Introduction; Overview of the World’s Population

Lundquist, Ch. 1, “Introduction”  
Lundquist, Ch. 2, “Demographic Data”  
Readings packet, “Population: Historical overview”

Feb 10, 15, 17 - Population, resources, environment, and food. A look at the theories of Malthus, Marx, the demographic transition, and others, followed by an examination of the effects of overpopulation in the world today.

Lundquist, Ch. 3, “Population Growth.”  
Readings packet, “Population, resources, environment & food”

Feb 22, 24 - Fertility: concepts and trends ; also, Birth Cohorts. A look at fertility concepts and measurement; The importance of age and sex structure; current status of fertility in the United States and the world; the Baby Boom and other birth cohorts

Lundquist, ch. 7, “Fertility.”  
Lundquist, Ch. 4, “Age and Sex Structure.”  
Readings packet, “Fertility: Concepts & Trends”  
Readings packet, “Birth cohorts.”

Mar 1, 3, 8 - Fertility: Issues, problems, policies. Includes adolescent fertility: costs and consequences; New reproductive technology and the issues it raises; the battle over reproductive rights.

Readings packet, “Fertility Issues: Teenage Sex & Unwed Pregnancy”  
Readings packet, “Fertility issues: Reproductive technology”  
Readings Packet, “Fertility Issues: The battle over reproductive rights”

Mar 10, 15 – Status and Roles of Women and Men. A discussion of the demographic implications of recent changes in gender roles, families, and households.

Readings packet, “The status and roles of women and men”

*Mar 15 – Take home exam handed out*

*Mar 17, 19 – NO CLASS. TAKE HOME EXAM DUE BY March 19 at 10:00 pm.* If you keep up with the readings this should be plenty of time to finish the exam. But, if the due date is problematic because you have several other exams and papers due at about the same time, contact me in advance and we can negotiate over an extension.

Mar 22, 24 - Demographics. A look at how demographic information is used in business, political, and social planning.

Readings packet, “Demographics.”

*Mar 26 – PAPER TOPICS ARE DUE. Drafts are due April 12 if you want me to offer comments.*

Mar 29, 31 – Marriage & Family. A discussion of the demographic implications of recent changes in families, and households.

Lundquist, Ch. 8, “Unions and Householding.”  
Readings packet, “Marriage, divorce, families and households”

April 5, 7 - Mortality; also, AIDS. Includes causes of death; differences in mortality by sex, marital status, age, etc.

Lundquist, Ch. 5, “Mortality.”  
Lundquist, Ch. 6, “Morbidity and Health.”  
Readings packet, “Health, disease, mortality & AIDS.”

April 12 - The elderly. Characteristics of the elderly; caring for the elderly; social security; social problems presented by the elderly. Samuel Preston’s 1985 PAA Presidential address (under generational warfare) will definitely be discussed.

Lundquist, Ch. 4, “Age and Sex Structure”, pp. 118-130 (Problems of old populations).  
Readings packet, “Aging: The Elderly & Their Caregivers”  
Readings packet, “Aging: Generational Warfare?”  
Readings packet, “Aging: Social Security.” (Time permitting)  
Readings packet, “The future of aging.” (Time permitting)

Apr 14 - Poverty and Wealth. Effects of sex, race, and other characteristics on status attainment; Poverty and welfare in America; the financial problems of the middle class, including credit & bankruptcy.

Readings packet, “Poverty & Welfare”

*Apr 26 – PAPERS DUE*



Apr 19, 26, 28 – There are a variety of related topics I would like to cover if time permits. Remember, even if we do not go over a topic in depth, you may have opportunities to address it using the course readings in one of the optional exam questions.

Race. We'll be talking about the importance of race throughout the course. In this part, we'll pick up some new issues, such as what is race and the controversy over multiracial classifications. We may also talk about housing and segregation and general demographic issues concerning minorities not covered elsewhere.

Readings packet, "The Relevance of Race"  
Readings packet, "Housing and Segregation." (Time permitting)  
Readings packet, "Diversity & Affirmative Action" (Time permitting)  
Lundquist, Ch. 11, "Population Diversity."

Migration (brief discussion) Causes and consequences of migration; current migration controversies, e.g. building the wall

Lundquist, Ch. 9, "Migration."  
Readings packet, "Migration."

Urbanization (brief discussion);

Lundquist, Ch. 10, "Urbanization."  
Readings packet, "Urbanization."

*May 3, 5 - Paper presentations.* There will actually be 4 or 5 paper sessions, 2 during class and another 2 or 3 outside of regular class time. You only need to attend 2 of the sessions: the session you present in and one other.

*May 10 – The Future; Catch up; Review for final exam; Take home final handed out.*

Discussion will include a focus on the bleak vision of the future presented in Doug Massey's Presidential Address to the Population Association of American, and the responses to it. We will definitely go over Massey's address in class.

Readings packet, "The Future."

*Friday, May 14, 6:15 PM – Take home finals are due* (but are welcome sooner). DO NOT BE LATE!!! I only have a few days to get your grades in, and I am not allowed to give incompletes.

### Key Dates:

First take home exam: Due March 19<sup>th</sup> by 10:00 pm  
Paper Topics submitted for approval: March 26  
Drafts due if you want advance comments: April 12  
Papers due: April 26  
Class presentations: May 3, 5  
Final take home exam due: Friday, May 14, 6:15 pm